

ENVIRONMENT NETWORK WEEKLY (ENW)

AEBN National ENW e-news – 2 December 2024

UPCOMING AEBN EVENTS

[AEBN Webinar - Interactive]

PLAN FOR 2025

[2025 AEBN National Conference on Environment, Climate Change and Energy](#)

New Laws, Developments and Funding for business in 2025

Objective

The objective of the Conference is to assist you to PLAN FOR 2025 in order to assist you to remain compliant with key environmental, climate change, carbon management and energy obligations in 2025!

About the Conference

Hear key Regulators from across Australia, including leading environmental lawyers and experts present on the CHANGES EXPECTED IN 2025 on new laws and emerging obligations for businesses on environmental, climate change, carbon management/emissions reduction and energy – to assist you to plan for 2025 and to remain compliant.

Who should attend?

The AEBN National Conference is for industry, business and councils Australia wide.

Time | Date

10.00am to 3.30pm (AEDT)
7 March 2025

[Details and Register - here](#)

FEDERAL

Proposed guidance and Consultation paper on the Sustainability Reporting regime:

Comment sought

ASIC has released for comment a draft regulatory guide on the sustainability reporting regime - [draft Regulatory Guide 000 Sustainability reporting \(Draft RG 000\)](#).

From 1 January 2025, a number of large Australian businesses and financial institutions will be required to prepare annual statutory sustainability reports containing climate-related financial disclosures.

The draft guide is for entities required to prepare a sustainability report under Chapter 2M of the Corporations Act. This may include companies (including registered corporations under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007), registered schemes, registrable superannuation entities and retail corporate collective investment vehicles.

The Draft RG 000 includes guidance on –

- who must prepare a sustainability report,
- how the regime will interact with existing legal obligations,
- how ASIC will administer the sustainability reporting requirements,
- specific guidance on ASIC's approach to granting relief from the regime and use of its new directions power,
- how ASIC will exercise specific powers under legislation (primarily the Corporations Act),
- how ASIC interprets the law,
- the principles underlying ASIC's approach, and
- practical guidance to entities about complying with their sustainability reporting obligations.

Draft RG 000 also addresses specific issues in relation to the contents of the sustainability report and sustainability-related financial disclosures outside the sustainability report.

ASIC Commissioner Kate O'Rourke said: 'Our focus for this regulatory guide is to assist preparers of sustainability reports to comply with their obligations so that users are provided with high-quality, decision-useful, climate-related financial disclosures that comply with the law and the sustainability standards.'

ASIC has also released for comment the [Consultation Paper 380 Sustainability reporting \(CP 380\)](#) that seeks stakeholder feedback on -

- ASIC's proposals to issue a regulatory guide for entities required to prepare a sustainability report under Chapter 2M of the Corporations Act;
- ASIC's proposals to facilitate sustainability reporting relief for stapled entities; and
- broader questions, issues or uncertainties that may inform ASIC's approach to any future guidance.

ASIC is encouraging Industry to engage with the draft guidance and to provide feedback on what ASIC is proposing. Feedback is expected to assist ASIC to ensure that they can effectively support the implementation of the sustainability reporting regime, advised Ms O'Rourke.

Ms O'Rourke added 'During this transition period, we will take a proportionate and pragmatic approach to supervision and enforcement.'

ASIC is encouraging all reporting entities to prepare for the new climate disclosure regime.

Please provide feedback on [Consultation Paper 380: Sustainability Reporting \(CP 380\)](#) by 19 December 2024.

Further details:

The *Treasury Laws Amendment (Financial Market Infrastructure and Other Measures) Act 2024* (Cth) requires mandatory climate reporting for large businesses and financial institutions in Australia through amendments to the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) and the *Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001* (Cth).

The mandatory climate reporting requirements will be phased in over the next 3 years across 3 groups of reporting entities, with the first reporting cohort required to prepare annual sustainability reports for financial years commencing on or after 1 January 2025.

The second and third reporting cohorts are required to prepare annual sustainability reports for the financial

years commencing on or after 1 July 2026 and 1 July 2027 respectively.

AEBN Comment

Join us on 7 March 2025 at the annual [2025 AEBN National Conference on Environment, Climate Change and Energy WEBINAR](#), as you will hear the Regulator including the experts present the details including the implications to businesses from across Australia.

Key outcomes of COP 29

In mid November 2024, Australia attended the 29th meeting of the annual Conference of the Parties - [COP29](#).

COP29 brought together 198 signatories to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement to address the global challenge of climate change. The signatories attended to reach an agreement.

A key focus for COP29 was finance, particularly looking at how global partners can come together to finance climate ambition.

Each year, the Australian Government sends an official delegation to COP to represent Australia as humanity strives to limit the global temperature increase to less than 2 degrees.

Some brief outcomes of COP29:

- Nations agreed to a new collective quantified goal on climate finance. The new goal is a significant commitment to mobilise US\$300 billion per year by 2035 to support developing countries respond to climate change.
- The goal also includes a call to secure at least US\$1.3 trillion from different sources to support climate action in developing countries.
- Australia and UK negotiated a new [climate and energy partnership](#). The partnership outlines Australia's commitment to work together with the UK to create

cleaner energy and jobs in both countries. As well as an ambition to play significant roles in the global clean energy transition.

- Australia also joined several initiatives as part of the COP29 Action Agenda. These initiatives bring countries together to progress key climate priorities. Australia signed up to the:
 - COP29 Hydrogen Declaration
 - COP29 Global Energy Storage and Grids Pledge
 - Call to Action for No New Coal in national climate plans
 - Clean Energy Finance Mission under the Global Clean Power Alliance (GCPA).

Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024-2030:

Updated

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has released the updated [Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024-2030](#) that provides new targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

Australia's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action plan is known as [Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024-2030](#). It has been updated to bring together existing work across Australia and guide the development of new and innovative approaches to implementing the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

This strategy establishes national targets in 6 priority areas of the GBF that are most relevant to addressing the key drivers of biodiversity decline in Australia between now and 2030.

The Federal Government with state and territory governments will jointly work together to focus on implementation planning. This will include:

- reviewing actions already underway in relation to the targets and enablers;

- identifying next steps for each target and enabler, including defining key terms;
- developing a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework to track Australia's progress.

Implementation planning will identify opportunities for individuals, communities, industries, businesses and all levels of government to contribute to the shared goal of halting and reversing biodiversity decline.

The Department will track and measure implementation at the national level. The Department will develop key performance indicators and methods for measuring Australia's overall progress towards meeting Australia's commitments.

The Department aims to achieve the GBF's mission that aims to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and to live in harmony with nature by 2050. The GBF has 23 targets to achieve by 2030 and 4 goals to achieve by 2050.

It aims to:

- conserve and restore biodiversity
- enhance First Nations stewardship
- strengthen benefit sharing
- encourage private investment in nature
- mainstream biodiversity considerations into decision-making.

National target to protect 30% of land and 30% of marine areas by 2030

The Federal Government has committed to a national target to protect and conserve 30% of Australia's land and 30% of marine areas by 2030. This is referred to as the 30 by 30 target.

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has released the [Achieving 30 by 30 on land: National Roadmap for protecting and conserving 30% of Australia's land by 2030](#) (National 30

by 30 Roadmap) that was developed with states and territories to support achievement of the land target. In 2024, all Environment Ministers agreed to the National 30 by 30 Roadmap.

The roadmap is expected to help coordinate national action to achieve 30 by 30 on land.

The roadmap:

- explains the role of both protected areas conserved areas in achieving the 30 by 30 land target,
- describes principles to guide efforts towards 30 by 30,
- raises awareness of programs that support 30 by 30,
- identifies indicators for tracking progress.

The roadmap complements:

- [Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024–2030](#)
- [Australia's Strategy for the National Reserve System 2009–2030](#)
- [National Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures Framework](#)
- relevant policies in each state and territory.

Tax incentive to drive investment in renewable hydrogen

The Federal Government has introduced the *Future Made in Australia (Production Tax Credits and Other Measures) Bill 2024* that is expected to establish the Hydrogen Production Tax Incentive (HPTI).

The HPTI is intended to:

- bring forward project development;
- make renewable hydrogen available sooner;

- build scale to reduce production costs over time.

The HPTI is expected to be delivered through Australia's tax system as a refundable tax offset. The HPTI is expected to provide a \$2 incentive per kilogram of renewable hydrogen to eligible producers for up to 10 years, between 1 July 2027 and 30 June 2040.

Developing a renewable hydrogen industry represents a significant economic opportunity for Australia for export and domestic use. This is through value-added manufacturing of green ammonia and fertilisers, iron and alumina.

The HPTI is a component of the [Future Made in Australia plan](#). It supports the [2024 National Hydrogen Strategy](#).

Australia-India Renewable Energy Partnership

On 19 November 2024, Australia and India welcomed the launch of the India-Australia Renewable Energy Partnership.

The partnership is expected to guide climate and energy cooperation. The partnership outlines 8 key areas for Australia and India to work together:

- solar PV
- green hydrogen
- solar supply chains
- energy storage
- circular economy for renewable energy
- two-way investment in renewable energy projects and allied areas
- capacity building
- other areas of mutual interest

Joint solar PV and green hydrogen projects are already underway and will continue under the partnership. The other 6 areas will be detailed through a new 1.5 Track Dialogue. The Dialogue will explore and define areas for cooperation.

Both countries will work together to build the future renewable workforce, including through skills and training.

It will also establish leadership in the commercialisation of cutting-edge renewable technology.

**ACCC Scheme’s
Environmental Planting 2024
method:**

Update released

The [latest](#) version of the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme’s [Reforestation by Environmental or Mallee Plantings 2024 method](#) has been released.

The 2014 version expired in September 2024. In comparison to the 2014 version, this method is clearer and simpler and it includes:

- the ability to start site preparation and planting as soon as you submit your project application;
- the choice to harvest seeds from your project, to support more environmental plantings in your local area;
- the option to do additional planting (infill planting) to support wildlife and promote biodiversity;
- the ability to consider adding [nature repair](#) projects once these opportunities become available;
- a relaxation of plant spacing requirements;
- the use of a single Reforestation Management Plan for all management information.

The release of the Environmental Planting 2024 method enables more projects under the ACCU Scheme to store carbon. The method is expected to help Australia reach [net zero](#) emissions by 2050.

**Export of waste from
Australia data –
January to June 2024**

The Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has released information that shows [data on waste exported from Australia](#) – January to June 2024.

The Department has collated Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data on national waste exports and provided a monthly summary of this data from Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 of the 2023-24 financial year.

The various waste classifications consists of - hazardous waste, plastics, textiles, leather, rubber, paper and cardboard, organics processing wastes, industrial processing wastes, glass, metals, including unclassified materials and more.

The [waste export data viewer](#) is designed to make waste export data more accessible for industry, governments and the public.

**CSIRO report on Australia
and global Synthetic
Greenhouses Gas emissions
2024:
Released**

The CSIRO has developed, for the Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, the [Australia and global Synthetic Greenhouse Gas emissions 2024 report](#) that provides information on:

- concentrations of synthetic greenhouse gases (SGG) in the atmosphere; AND
- estimates of emissions of these gases both for Australia and globally.

The report also provides information on the modelling and techniques used to derive data. It compares CSIRO estimates of emissions to estimates made under the Australian National Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

Information is based on SGG concentrations observed at the Cape Grim facility in Tasmania up to the end of 2023. Emissions are estimated up to 2022.

The report shows increasing concentrations of all the main gases reported in the atmosphere at Cape Grim. This is consistent with global background atmospheric changes.

**Quarterly Carbon Market
Report –
September 2024 quarter**

The Clean Energy Regulator has released the [latest](#) Quarterly Carbon Market Report (QCMR). The report provides a number of highlights.

**Clean Energy Regulator
releases first stage of new
Unit and Certificate Registry**

The Clean Energy Regulatory has announced the release of the first stage of the new [Unit and Certificate Registry](#), to support Australia’s expanding carbon and environmental markets.

The new registry provides a modern, secure place to hold and transfer multiple unit and certificate types and will connect with external digital trading platforms.

Units held in Australian National Registry of Emissions Units (ANREU) accounts will be progressively transitioned from the current system to the new registry. Safeguard Mechanism credit units (SMCs) will be the first units to be held in the new registry when they are issued for the first time in early 2025.

Australian carbon credit units (ACCU) and international units held in ANREU accounts will continue to be accessible and managed through the existing ANREU system until they are moved to the new registry.

The Clean Energy Regulator will progressively bring other units and certificates that they administer into the new registry over the next year.

Audit Thresholds Instruments consultation:

Comment sought

The Clean Energy Regulator seeks feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of the [Carbon Credits \(Carbon Farming Initiative\) \(Audit Thresholds\) Instrument 2015](#).

The Audit Thresholds Instrument will sunset and be repealed on 1 April 2025. Your feedback will help inform a new Audit Thresholds Instrument.

As part of the consultation, the Clean Energy Regulator is also seeking feedback on whether alternative assurance arrangements should be extended to the new reforestation by environmental or mallee plantings method.

The Clean Energy Regulator has advised that it is not proposing to increase the audit burden for projects that are already registered.

Please provide comment by 15 December 2024 via the [online Survey](#).

Your feedback will help inform a new Audit Thresholds Instrument.

VICTORIA

New Factsheet on Managing Plastic Feedstock:

Released

EPA Victoria has released a new Fact Sheet on [Managing plastic feedstock](#).

Plastic feedstock is the raw material such as flakes, powder, recycled chips and resin pellets used to make plastic products. These products include rainwater tanks, pipes, medical supplies, textiles, electronics, food containers and drink bottles.

The fact sheet is designed to assist businesses that produce, manufacture, transport, store, handle, use, install and maintain plastic products and those that collect, recycle or dispose of plastic products and feedstock to assess and manage the risk of these materials escaping into the environment.

EPA Victoria shuts down recycler

EPA Victoria has [revoked](#) the permissions of a recycling company in Melbourne's West. The company and Director have been issued with \$45,000 in court-imposed fines and costs.

The company will no longer operate a waste transfer facility after extensive investigation that led to EPA Victoria issuing the Notice of Revocation late this year for its EPA permissions.

The decision was based on the company's continued non-compliance and the risk to human health and the environment from the activities conducted at the premises.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Recycled Water Roadmap for NSW:

Comment sought

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is seeking inputs on the draft New South Wales Recycled Water Roadmap.

The Department is developing a Recycled Water Roadmap to make it easier for water utilities to assess, cost and engage with their customers on recycled water, and invest in it for both drinking and non-drinking purposes.

The draft Roadmap sets out a new vision for expanding water recycling across the state where it is safe, beneficial, and cost effective, ensuring a robust policy and regulatory framework is in place for future projects.

Water recycling can play a critical role in helping Australia to drought-proof water supplies, supporting the delivery of new housing and development in the medium-to-long term and enhancing the liveability of cities and towns.

The draft Roadmap looks at levers the NSW Government can pull over the next 2 years, including policy development, regulatory changes, investigation of costs, benefits and updating guidance that will facilitate water recycling.

Comment is sought by 6 December 2024 via the [online survey](#).

Draft Safety in Forest Harvesting Operations: Code of Practice

Comment sought

SafeWork NSW, in consultation with stakeholders, has updated the draft [Safety in forest harvesting operations Code of Practice](#).

The code provides information and guidance to make sure health and safety risks in forest harvesting operations are safely managed according to work health and safety laws.

Feedback is sought by 15 December 2024 via the [online survey](#).

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Firm Energy Reliability Mechanism:

Comment sought

The SA Government is seeking feedback on the government's approach to [ensuring reliable and secure electricity for SA](#), now and into the future.

With South Australia at the forefront of the national energy transition to low emission sources, it is vital to ensure system reliability and resilience to provide certainty to energy users and reduce the risk of consumer exposure to price shocks and unmet electricity demand.

The government has proposed a framework to support sufficient long duration firm capacity to ensure secure, reliable and resilient electricity supply for South Australia, at least-cost to consumers.

Your feedback is sought by 11.59pm, 20 December 2024 on the proposed policy framework, the scheme's design and objectives, and how the scheme will operate.

Rehabilitation Liability Estimation Calculator for mining operators and exploration licence holders:

Released

The South Australian Government has released its latest version of the [Rehabilitation Liability Estimation Calculator](#). The Calculator has been updated to reflect current industry costs, inflation adjustment and improved ability to estimate exploration rehabilitation costs.

The calculator provides a tool for mining operators and exploration licence holders to assess the potential maximum rehabilitation liability for individual mining and exploration operations, and is used to determine the value of a bond, which is set by the Minister for Energy and Mining under Section 62 of the *Mining Act 1971*.

The setting of a bond provides a mechanism to protect the state and community from assuming post mining rehabilitation liabilities.

A [user manual](#) is also available.

New waste funding for SA Councils

Green Industries SA has announced two new funding opportunities for Councils to manage waste -

- The [Council Modernisation](#) funding for councils is expected to improve waste management and recycling services through the introduction of innovative measures to improve operational efficiencies, customer service and economic development benefits for the community,

Council Modernisation funding grants from \$15,000 to a maximum of \$100,000 (excluding GST) per project are invited. All applicants must contribute at least 50% of total project costs (match the grant funding) from sources other than the South Australian and Australian governments. In-kind contributions cannot be counted towards the matched

50% contribution. The [guidelines and application form are available here](#).

- [Kerbside Food Waste Systems](#) funding for councils is expected to introduce and maintain sustainable and efficient household food organics recycling systems.

Kerbside Food Waste Systems funding for South Australian councils is available on a 'per serviced tenement' basis. Green Industries SA will provide up to 50% of the costs, up to a maximum of \$10 per tenement, with council required to provide a satisfactory performance report within 12 months of the system rollout. The [guidelines and application form are available here](#).

Both grant rounds close at 5.00pm, 13 December 2024.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: Round 2 of Carbon Innovation Grants:

Program opens

The WA Government is providing funding through [Round 2 of the Carbon Innovation Grants Program](#) to support WA heavy industries to transition to net zero carbon emissions.

The grants will be used to support organisations developing technologies that can help remove, reduce or offset hard-to-abate emissions created by heavy industrial processes.

More than \$4 million in grant funding is now available for projects advancing technologies towards market readiness and commercialisation.

The Carbon Innovation Grants Program will fund feasibility studies, pilot projects and capital works to accelerate Western Australia's transition to net zero emissions by 2050.

The projects are selected through a competitive process that requires

applicants to demonstrate the benefits to heavy industry and the mitigation of hard-to-abate emissions.

Applications close 5.00pm, 28 February 2025 (AWST).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: E-waste Infrastructure Grants Program

The WA Government implemented a statewide ban on e-waste disposal to landfill on 1 July 2024.

E-waste includes items with a plug, battery or cord, including computers and mobile phones, as well as home appliances, such as dishwashers, washing machines and dryers.

The ban supports the objectives in the [Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030](#) to recover more valuable resources from waste and to protect the environment by managing waste responsibly.

The WA Department of Water and Environmental Regulation is providing further funding under the [E-waste Infrastructure Grants Program](#). The WA Government is administering further grant funding through competitive grant rounds. The grant support the ban by funding increased e-waste collection, storage and/or reuse including e-waste processing/recycling.